
**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

Property Address:	1901 9th Street NW	X	Agenda
Landmark/District:	Greater U Street Historic District		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	February 27, 2020		Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	HP 20-117	X	Alteration Subdivision

Ronnie McGhee and Associates, architect and agent for property owner 9th Street LLC, seeks concept review of a renovation of and four-story rear addition to a two-story brick house.

Proposal

The house is located near the corner of 9th and T Streets, abutting the rear yard of the corner building, thus semidetached, affording public views along the side of the subject property and into its own rear yard. It is a two-story contributing brick building with a rear ell, built before 1888 and almost certainly in the late 1870s. The building is not part of matching row, but stands on a block with diverse rowhouse types ranging in height from two to three stories. The house has a one-story rear addition. The front elevation appears to retain its original windows.

Proposal

The four-story addition proposes to infill most of the rear lot and demolish the entire original ell and its addition, putting the forward wall of the new construction 25 feet back from the house's façade. The existing windows and doors will be replaced per HPO guidelines, and the interior will be renovated. The building's structural integrity has not been determined. The addition is proposed to be clad in cementitious panel to match the color of the neighbor's property.

Evaluation

The demolition of the original ell is considerable, but the ell makes up maybe a quarter of the house's volume. The Board has frequently found that extent of demolition of the rear of a building to not constitute demolition of the building in significant part.

A flag test conducted with Historic Preservation staff showed that the fourth story, topping out at 20 feet above the roof of the historic main block, will be highly visible from the street.¹ There are no two-story roof additions on that block; a previous proposal (HPA 18-269) for a two-story roof addition was denied. This addition would be strikingly prominent as seen over or along the side of this modest historic building and would create an odd massing and disproportionate bulk that is not sufficiently subordinate to the main block.

¹ A flag test for a third story (ten feet tall) alone was performed as well. Although such an addition would be visible as well, it is less so and may prove sufficiently compatible with other third-story additions in the District.

Recommendation

HPO recommends that the Board deny the concept for a fourth story addition as incompatible with the character of the historic district and inconsistent with the purposes of the Act, and recommends that the applicant develop the project with a two- or possibly three-story addition to be resubmitted to the Board for review.

Staff Contact: Imania Price